

the Oasis in the calm winter and spring months. Even at the present day the Oasis is enlarging its boundary, and the surface of the plateau is being ground away by sand, and the underlying clays on the faces of the scarps are being steadily excavated. The water in the Oasis is derived from the rainfall of the highlands in the interior of Africa, which, coming by way of the permeable underground strata, appears where these strata rise to the surface or are pierced by wells, though strangely enough the wells are chiefly on the down-throw side of the fault, *i.e.* to the eastward of it.

The history of the Oasis of Kharga in its relation to Egyptian history is full of interest in every way. That it was well known to the Egyptians under the Early Empire is tolerably certain, for from the inscription of the officer Una who made expeditions into the deserts of Libya and the Sûdân we know that the tribes of the districts in the neighbourhood of it were in the habit of waging war against each other. Under the eighteenth dynasty the Oasis of the North and the Oasis of the South were subject to the great kings Thothmes III. and Amenhetep III., and there is no doubt that a considerable trade between them and Egypt was in existence in still earlier times. Every now and then the tribes revolted against the rule of Egypt, but their triumph was short-lived, for Egyptian soldiers appeared and the rebellion was stamped out in a peculiarly firm manner, and the trees were cut down and the gardens destroyed. In the twenty-second dynasty the Oases were still reckoned as a part of Egypt, and under the Persians Kharga was chosen by Darius I. as the site of the fine temple which he built there; this temple was finished by Darius II., and must have been, judging by its present remains, a striking and a remarkable object. It is curious to note that the Egyptians at one time believed that the souls of the dead made their way to the Oases, and it is obvious that the green fields and gardens full of vines and palm trees easily connected themselves in their minds with the Elysian Fields, wherein every Egyptian hoped eventually to live. Before the end of the twenty-sixth dynasty Kharga was used as a place of banishment for criminals and evil doers, and the Romans found it necessary to maintain a garrison at Hibis, the chief city of the Oasis, to keep order. Christianity was introduced into the Oasis by one of the Apostles, who is said to have died and been buried there, and when Nestorius was banished there A.D. 435 he found flourishing Christian communities at several places in the Oasis who would, no doubt, accord him a far from hearty welcome.

Mr. Ball has consulted the works of travellers such as Cailliaud and Hoskins, Rohlf's and Brugsch, and although he has little new to say about the temples and other buildings which they described, his notes on the temples of Hibis, Nadura, Kasr al-Guehda, Kasr Zaiyân, Kasr Dûsh, or Kysis, are most useful, especially as they are accompanied by clear plans. His remarks on the Christian antiquities are somewhat meagre, but then he is an engineer and not an archæologist. In the next edition of his work the paragraph on p. 78 in which he states that the Christian tombs are those of the followers of Nestorius should be modified, for we know on the authority of Christian tradition and writings that there were several congregations of Christians in the Oasis of Kharga one or two centuries before the time of Nestorius, and it is evident that they must have left graves behind them. The tombs may then as well belong to the third and fourth as to the fifth and sixth centuries; and seeing that Nestorius was a violent opponent of the Monophysites in Egypt, it is more than doubtful if he had any followers at all among the Jacobite Christians of Kharga. But these considerations in no way affect the value of Mr. Ball's engineering work, though they do show that an engineer is not also necessarily an archæologist.

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SIR WILLIAM MACCORMAC, BART., K.C.B.,
K.C.V.O.

SIR WILLIAM MACCORMAC, whose death occurred suddenly and unexpectedly on the morning of December 4 at Bath, where he had gone for treatment of an illness which his intimate friends, although feeling considerable anxiety on his behalf, little thought would end so tragically, was one of the most prominent figures in the medical profession in London. He was the son of a well-known Belfast physician, Dr. Henry MacCormac, the author of such philosophical works as "The Philosophy of Human Nature," published in 1837, and "Aspirations from the Inner Life," in 1860, as well as of works on the nature, treatment and prevention of consumption, which attracted much attention at the time and have come again into notice recently as having anticipated the modern doctrine of the open-air treatment of tubercular disease. Sir William MacCormac was born in Belfast on January 17, 1836; he was educated in his native city and graduated as M.A. of the Queen's University of Ireland in 1858. He subsequently studied medicine in Dublin and Paris and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, in 1864, entering at the same time into the active work of his profession as surgeon to the Royal Belfast Hospital, a post which he held until 1870.

On the outbreak of the Franco-German war he returned to Paris and offered his services to the French Red Cross Society, "*La Société de Secours aux blessés militaires*." His offer was accepted and he was ordered to Metz, where he was taken prisoner, released and sent back to Paris. It was then that, along with Mr. Furley, now Sir John Furley, and Dr. Philip Frank, he came in contact with Dr. Marion Sims and other Americans (who had come over with a large quantity of material, but with little or no funds), and established the Anglo-American Ambulance with the financial assistance of the National Aid Society, which had been formed in London at the beginning of the war. The Ambulance proceeded at once to Sedan under the charge of Dr. Marion Sims, with MacCormac as second in command, and arrived there in time to take an active and prominent part in the decisive battle of the campaign. At Sedan MacCormac was in his element, and it was there that he laid the foundation of his future greatness. His "Notes and Recollections of an Ambulance Surgeon," published in 1871, vividly described his experiences of the battle and the absorbing, incessant work of a surgeon in the midst of carnage. The book has been translated into German, French, Dutch, Italian, Russian and Japanese, and has made his name a household word amongst the military surgeons of Europe. When the pressure of the work in Sedan was over MacCormac returned to England, and with the assistance of the influential committee of the National Aid Society was appointed to the staff of St. Thomas's Hospital, which had just been opened. He took the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, England, at the same time, and remained associated with St. Thomas's in the varying capacities of assistant surgeon, surgeon and lecturer on surgery in the medical school, and consulting surgeon and Emeritus lecturer on clinical surgery. He also held many other consulting appointments in London and was examiner in connection with the naval and military medical services.

His reputation as an authority on gunshot wounds was not allowed to lapse for want of opportunity. In 1876 he accompanied the late Lord Wantage, then Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, to Alexinatz during the war between Serbia and Turkey. His period of stay at the seat of war was, however, brief, as he and his companion were obliged to take flight with the retreating army. In 1899 he was appointed a consulting surgeon to the field force in South Africa, and saw much of the results of the earlier and fiercer struggles of the war.

The European fame of Sir William MacCormac as a British surgeon almost equals that of Lord Lister. Honours were showered upon him by the Governments and learned societies of foreign States, and his friends included some of the most famous continental surgeons of modern times. Stromeyer, Esmarch, Langenbeck, Coler, Billroth, Mundy, Larrey, Pozzi and many others knew and admired his work and valued his friendship, while his commanding presence was recognised and acclaimed in all assemblies of military surgeons, wherever he went. Indeed it may be said of him that no man in this country kept up his connection with colleagues abroad as he did. His hospitality to them and to all his friends was proverbial.

MacCormac's minor contributions to the literature of his profession are chiefly found in the St. Thomas's Hospital reports and in the medical journals. His larger works, in addition to articles on "Gunshot Wounds" in Heath's "Surgery," "Diseases of the Bones and Joints" in Quain's "Dictionary of Medicine," and "Hernia" in Treves' "System of Surgery," are "Antiseptic Surgery," the development of an address delivered at St. Thomas's Hospital, published in 1880 and translated into French and Russian, and "Surgical Operations," the first part of which, the ligatures of arteries, was published in 1885, and the second, operations on joints and nerves, in 1889. With the exception, however, of his "Notes and Recollections of an Ambulance Surgeon," none of his writings are likely to have the same historical interest as his father's work on consumption, and it can scarcely be claimed that the success of his career was due to any exercise of a power for scientific investigation, although he undoubtedly possessed that power. He was skilful as an operator, lucid and loved as a teacher; but it was his wisdom in counsel, the sanity of his judgment, the common sense of his oratory, rather than any marked advances made by him in the science and art of surgery, that gained him the unique distinction of being elected president of the Royal College of Surgeons four times in succession. He was knighted in 1881 for his services as general secretary of the Seventh International Medical Congress in London, and was created a baronet on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee in 1897. He was appointed a K.C.V.O. in 1898 and a K.C.B. in February last after his return from South Africa. He was appointed Surgeon-in-Ordinary to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and Honorary Sergeant-Surgeon to the King on his Majesty's accession to the Throne. The last year of his life was somewhat saddened by the controversies that arose in consequence of his outspoken support of the Army Medical Service during the war. He felt bitterly how much the country had been misled by those who derided the work of the Army medical officers and who knew little of war and still less of the surgical possibilities of war.

Sir William MacCormac married, in 1861, Miss Charteris, of Belfast, but had no family. Lady MacCormac, who was his life-long companion and accompanied him wherever he went, survives him.

The funeral of Sir William MacCormac took place on Monday, the first part of the funeral service being observed at the church of St. Peter, Vere Street. His Majesty the King was represented by General Godfrey Clerk. The French and German Embassies in London were represented, respectively, by M. E. Daeschner and Major Count von Bredow. The French Consul-General in London was also present. The council of the Royal College of Surgeons was represented by Mr. J. Langton, Mr. H. G. Howse, Mr. T. Bryant, Mr. A. Willett, Mr. R. Harrison, Mr. H. T. Butlin and Mr. W. W. Cheyne. Prof. C. Stewart, conservator of the museum, was also present, as well as many others connected with the Royal College of Surgeons and the profession of surgery.

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The Royal College of Physicians was represented by Sir W. S. Church (president), Sir Dyce Duckworth (treasurer) and Dr. E. Liveing (registrar). Of St. Thomas's Hospital, with which Sir W. MacCormac had been so long connected, there were many representatives. Among other institutions represented were the French Hospital, the Army Medical Department, Medical Department of the Navy, the Italian Hospital, Queen Charlotte's Hospital, the University of London, the British Museum and the British Association. Among many others present were Lord Lister, Sir William Broadbent, Sir Norman Lockyer, Sir Thomas Smith, Sir Lauder Brunton, Dr. T. Seymour Tuke, Dr. P. H. Pye-Smith, Major-General Sir Owen Tudor Burne, Mr. Andrew Clark, Sir J. and Lady Fayrer, Dr. and Mrs. D'Arcy Power, Sir F. and Lady Semon, Lady Dyce Duckworth, Sir A. S. Wells, Sir S. Wilks, Sir J. W. Williams and Sir James Blyth.

THOMAS MEEHAN.

THE eminently successful life of Thomas Meehan, distinguished as a gardener, a botanist and a citizen, closed on November 19. Mr. Meehan was born in London in March 1826, and received what little schooling he had in the Isle of Wight, where his family had settled. Leaving school at an early age, and displaying a marked aptitude for gardening, he was employed under his father in the gardens of Colonel Francis Vernon Harcourt, at St. Clare, near Ryde. When only fourteen he succeeded in raising the first hybrid *Fuchsia*, *St. Clare*, and in appreciation of a paper which he published on *Rubus* was elected, when only nineteen, a member of the Wernerian Society. After holding various gardening appointments he entered the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in 1846, on the recommendations of Dr. Bromfield and Prof. C. C. Babington. At Kew, where he stayed a little more than two years, he made the acquaintance of Berthold Seemann, with whom he was a candidate for the appointment of botanist to the *Herald* expedition. On leaving Kew he became head-gardener to the Earl of Shrewsbury at Alton Towers, a post which, owing to his religious opinions, he was soon obliged to relinquish. Though offered tempting inducements to remain in his native country, Meehan determined to make America his home, and reached Philadelphia in March 1848.

His career there opened in the humble position of a nursery labourer. But advancement quickly followed. He obtained employment in the famous Bartram Gardens of Philadelphia, and in 1853, with remarkably little capital, established a nursery business of his own, which, in conjunction with his sons, he continued to the end of his life. He was a voluminous writer on horticultural and botanical subjects. He founded the well-known *Meehan's Monthly*, and half a century ago published his "Handbook of Ornamental Trees." In 1878-79 appeared "The Native Flowers and Ferns of the United States," a handsome illustrated work in two large octavo volumes. His botanical papers contributed to various scientific journals, and chiefly to the *Proceedings* of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, number considerably more than a hundred. Enthusiastic in all his undertakings, Meehan became a leading member of the Philadelphia Academy, of which he was vice-president for more than twenty years; a representative of his ward in the Common Council, and a member of the local school board; while his botanical attainments secured for him the proud position of Botanist to the Pennsylvania State Board of Agriculture.

Reviewing his life's story, the heroic toil, the splendid energy, the brilliant success achieved in spite of all obstacles, a tribute of praise such as this, and from a far wider world, is due to the memory of Thomas Meehan.

S. A. SKAN.